

A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

As Director Corporate Sustainability & Compliance, Patrick Wedewardt is responsible for Interroll's Group-wide sustainability reporting. We asked the 36-year-old manager how a company's responsibility for the environment and people can actually be expressed in figures.



Patrick Wedewardt, Director Corporate Sustainability & Compliance

Since September 2021, you have been championing the issue of sustainability at Interroll at the Group level. What is your professional background?

Patrick Wedewardt: I come from the automotive industry, where most recently I spent two years in Shanghai as head of a business unit and also in charge of integrated management systems in the automotive aftermarket. My focus in this position was on improving, standardizing and harmonizing processes relating to quality, environmental protection and occupational safety as effectively and continuously as possible. My strong interest in sustainability stems not only from my professional background, but also from my passion for backpacking trips close in nature that have taken me through some of the world's most diverse landscapes and cultures, and also from my voluntary work with the German Red Cross in the area of emergency preparedness and civil protection.

As with modern management systems, sustainability reporting is also about hard numbers, isn't it?

Yes and no. On the one hand, we have now reached the stage in our long-standing, largely qualitative sustainability reporting where for the first time we are quantifying our activities in Switzerland and in our international subsidiaries with key figures. In the current report covering the 2022 financial year, we are following the standards of the Global Reporting Initiative, or GRI, and are also incorporating other frameworks into the report. As a result, we are quantifying our behavior in this area in numbers throughout the Group, making it measurable and thus comparable over time.

“The topic of sustainability is complex and far-reaching – it’s not a sprint but a marathon.”

were defined for the fields of action and then transferred to the strategic and content-related responsibility of individual members of Group Management, working in collaboration with local management to achieve the corresponding targets. This approach not only ensures an efficient decision-making process, but also makes it easy to identify best practices that reinforce the impact of the measures.

What basic insights have you personally gained in preparing the current sustainability report?

My expectations have been basically confirmed. The topic of sustainability is complex and far-reaching – it's not a sprint but a marathon for society and the individual company alike. Because sustainability goals can only be achieved jointly, everyone involved needs to cooperate and be committed to achieve them. This is precisely why Interroll is on a very good path.

And on the other hand?

You won't achieve anything with such a demanding and comprehensive task if people don't identify with it, get involved and cooperate closely with each other - at all levels and at all sites. You can't manage this project alone at your computer in the office. At the beginning, we held local working meetings with representatives from our sites. The aim was to jointly define the sustainability areas and fields of action in which we can have the greatest impact with appropriate measures. I was very impressed by the commitment of the local managers and the entire team to tackle this issue.

What happened next?

For our quantified reporting, we then started to collect the necessary data, such as energy consumption and energy sources, from our 35 subsidiaries worldwide. With the help of Ecovadis, a leading provider of sustainability assessments, we began to assess our manufacturing subsidiaries, including Interroll SA in Switzerland, which achieved an excellent result. We did so to gain initial experience with the relevant methodology in this area, as we will be applying it to our external suppliers as well. We also held discussions with customers and investors to include the perspective of external stakeholders. This input included, for example, the results of ESG rating agencies such as Moodys and Sustainalytics.

And how did you deal with the areas identified for action?

The entire topic was vigorously pursued within the company by both the Board of Directors and the Group Management. Policies, guidelines and targets